

**Department of Legislative Services**  
Maryland General Assembly  
2019 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**  
**First Reader**

House Bill 1401 (Delegate Barve)  
Environment and Transportation

---

**Vehicle Laws - Overweight Vehicles - Heavyweight Port Corridor Permit**

---

This bill authorizes the State Highway Administration (SHA) to designate any highway within a 10-mile radius of the Port of Baltimore to be part of a heavyweight port corridor. The bill increases the permitted maximum gross vehicle weight of vehicles carrying international freight (and traveling on the designated highways) from 90,000 to 100,000 pounds, pursuant to existing requirements that such vehicles obtain a permit from SHA.

---

**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** Transportation Trust Fund (TTF) expenditures increase by as much as \$130,000 for reprogramming. General fund revenues may decrease minimally to the extent fewer fines are issued for exceeding permitted maximum vehicle weights.

**Local Effect:** The bill does not directly affect local finances or operations.

**Small Business Effect:** Potential meaningful.

---

**Analysis**

**Current Law:** SHA is authorized to issue a permit for a vehicle carrying manifested international freight (as the only load of the vehicle) in a sealed, seagoing container on a semitrailer if the vehicle does not exceed:

- 22,400 pounds gross maximum weight for a single axle;
- 44,000 pounds gross maximum weight for two consecutive axles; or
- 90,000 pounds gross maximum weight.

A vehicle issued a permit for carrying international freight may be operated only on the parts of interstate and State highways that are designated by the Secretary of Transportation in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Transportation. Such vehicles may also travel on any other highway (as authorized by the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT)) that is the shortest practical route between a designated highway and (1) a truck terminal; (2) a port or other point of origin or designation; or (3) facilities for food, fuel, repairs, or rest (but only up to one mile).

MDOT must adopt regulations related to the issuance of such permits. However, the authority granted to MDOT to issue the permits may not be exercised unless and until MDOT determines in writing that the use of such permits (1) is required to provide access to (or egress from) the Port of Baltimore for international freight; (2) will not cause extraordinary damage to roads and bridges in the State or require extraordinary expense for maintenance; (3) will not cause undue adverse environmental impact upon (or unduly disrupt) residential neighborhoods; and (4) will not impair highway safety.

**State Fiscal Effect:** SHA advises that reprogramming costs are likely to be incurred under the bill in order to modify its permitting system. In fiscal 2020 only, TTF expenditures increase by as much as \$130,000 to make the required changes.

SHA also indicates that roadways should not be significantly affected under the bill, as MDOT is required under current law to ensure that permits issued for carrying international freight will not unduly damage roadways and bridges. Based on route and vehicle information, SHA's permitting systems are able to determine whether the issuance of a permit will exceed the parameters of roadways along the route. Therefore, the bill is not expected to materially affect TTF highway maintenance expenditures.

SHA further advises that it does not currently charge a fee for issuing a permit to vehicles carrying international freight from the Port of Baltimore and is unlikely to do so under the bill. Thus, TTF revenues are not expected to be affected by the bill.

**Small Business Effect:** Any small businesses that are involved in transporting international freight to and from the Port of Baltimore may be able to carry heavier loads under the bill. Such businesses may realize meaningful savings due to more efficient operations (and fewer trips).

---

## Additional Information

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Department of State Police; Maryland Department of Transportation; Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - March 8, 2019  
mm/ljm

---

Analysis by: Eric F. Pierce

Direct Inquiries to:  
(410) 946-5510  
(301) 970-5510